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DUNDALK EAGLE

On the Waterfront by James J. White, Executive Director, Maryland Port Administration Increased Traffic at Port is Good News for Local Jobs

As we continue to rebound from one of the worst economic periods in our nation's history, the Port of Baltimore has achieved some significant progress in both our cargo and cruise businesses.

We recently learned that out of all U.S. ports, Baltimore had jumped to 11th in total dollar value of cargo and 13th in amount of cargo tonnage handled as a result of our performance in 2010. In 2009, Baltimore's ranks in those categories were 12th and 15th, respectively.

Among individual commodities, the Port of Baltimore soared to number one for trucks (ranked second in 2009), imported salt (sixth in 2009), and imported iron ore (second in 2009). Baltimore was also able to maintain market share and remain the number one port in the nation for handling roll on/roll off cargo (farm and construction machinery), imported forest products, imported gypsum, and imported sugar. The port moved up from third to second for exported coal and imported aluminum.

This positive trend has continued into 2011. During the first six months of this year, Baltimore handled more auto tonnage than any other U.S. port - including New York, which handled the most cars in 2010, when Baltimore finished second. More than 538,000 tons of autos made their way through Baltimore's public and private terminals, a 15 percent increase over the same time period in 2010.

Overall general cargo at our public and private terminals during the first half of 2011 was up 13 percent while the total amount of foreign commerce was up 12 percent. The total dollar value of cargo saw a 24-percent increase.

Our cruise business has also witnessed some favorable gains. Last year, Baltimore had the fifth-highest number of cruise passengers among East Coast ports, which was one slot higher than in 2009. Nationally, the port ranked 12th, up from 14th in 2009. This year we have a record 112 cruises sailing from Baltimore, and we expect to surpass last year's record for passengers.

The advances in both our cargo and cruise businesses is very good news for the 16,700 direct jobs at the Port of Baltimore. More business means more work hours for our longshoremen and women. And that's something we can all celebrate.